

Tram Bars: All-natural Kick

Contributed by Tyler Cohen
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Price: \$3-4

trambars.com

I'm a big fan of energy gels, bars, blocks, nuggets and drinks. They give me the kick I need when I'm dragging ass, the extra oomph to get back to the car, or the psych to put in another lap. But sometimes a cherry-flavored, taurine-injected gummy-goop – while my heart thumps like a Howitzer and my legs turn to mush – is last thing I want. So I was excited to discover Tram Bars.

These bars look similar to those sawdust-like energy cubes found in the bulk section of health-food stores. But looks can be deceiving – an adage that holds true for Tram Bars. Soft and moist, think Rice Krispies treats meet GORP worthy of a king. Packed with organic ingredients like honey, peanut butter, raisins, and dried bananas and apricots, each bar is a yummy combination of texture and flavor.

The bars were born almost 20 years ago at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, where skier Kate Schade packed her pockets full of homemade goodies to ensure full days on the slopes. Over time, she perfected the recipe and began offering Tram Bars locally. They're still made and packaged below the Tetons, in Victor, Idaho.

Head 160 miles due south from Victor and you'll find Powder Mountain, Utah, site of the 2010 Backcountry Gear Test Week. When dozens of skiers gathered at PowMou to test next year's best gear, long days and rowdy nights gave way to bleary eyes and rubbery legs. But a steady stream of Tram Bars kept testers charging hard. Though not the equivalent power surge of a less natural energy "food," the bars offered lasting energy in a hunger-curbing size. And they disappeared fast.

If you're seeking a muscle-rejuvenating energy zing, stick to gels and nuggets. But give Tram Bars a shot if you're after a healthy, all-natural snack that will keep you going strong on your next tour.